

# *Negotiating Pragmatic Competence in Computer Mediated Communication: The Case of Korean Address Terms*

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## **ABSTRACT**

This paper examines how L2 learners of Korean manifest pragmatic competence in their use of address terms in computer-mediated communication (CMC) and how they use these terms to negotiate their identities. Four UK-based learners of Korean with competence levels ranging from Novice High through Intermediate High participated in the study, contributing transcripts of CMC interactions and participating in retrospective interviews over a three-month period. Qualitative analysis of the data shows that CMC provided a fertile context for these learners to manifest pragmatic competence in the use of address terms and to progress beyond classroom learning. Address terms also worked as powerful tools for these learners to establish intimate relationships with Korean acquaintances and negotiate identities as legitimate speakers of the language. However, this process of identity negotiation was complicated by gaps in their pragmatic competence, their preexisting identities and differing expectations on the part of Korean interlocutors. Ultimately, the analysis shows that the question of what constitutes “appropriate” use of address terms in CMC interactions involving L2 learners of Korean is unstable and open to negotiation. The implications of this finding for future research and for KSL (Korean as a Second Language) teaching methodologies are addressed in the conclusion.

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## **KEYWORDS**

Computer-mediated Communication (CMC), Pragmatic Competence, Identity, Korean, Address Terms

## **INTRODUCTION**

Traditional classroom-based instruction has been criticized for being inadequate for the development of pragmatic competence. Firstly, textbook dialogues are often inauthentic in their representation of fillers (Gilmore, 2004), speech acts (Wang, 1999) and, more closely related to the current study, address terms and honorifics (Brown, 2010; Choo, 1999; You, 2002). Secondly, pragmatic information frequently suffers from overgeneralization, simplification and misrepresentation (Barron, 2003) and does not highlight possible social consequences of failure to use appropriate language (Gilmore, 2007). Thirdly, the structure of classroom interaction tends to be pragmatically impoverished. Classroom interactions are “to various degrees, teacher-controlled or group-controlled according to the topic at hand and the linguistic and/or procedural rules governing the activity” (Kramsch, 1985, p. 175). In this context, there is little opportunity for a varied range of pragmatic features (speech acts, politeness markers, discourse markers) to be represented (Kasper & Rose, 1999).

Given this state of affairs, teachers and researchers have looked towards classroom technology, CALL and computer-mediated communication (CMC herein) as preferable routes for developing pragmatic competence. Taguchi (2011) points out that the use of technology is well suited to the teaching of pragmatics since it embodies several factors recognized as

key to pragmatic learning, such as input, interaction, simulation and multimodality. In addition, multimedia and "new" technologies are seen more broadly as providing increased access to materials that are more authentic than those found in more traditional teaching materials (Belz, 2007) and help overcome the limitations of classroom learning (Blattner & Fiori, 2009). A number of authors have offered evidence supporting the principle that CMC can support comprehensible input and modified output by negotiation of meaning which enhances language acquisition (Blake, 2000; Kitade, 2006; Pellettieri, 2000). Perhaps most crucially, CMC encourages L2 learners "to move away from simulated classroom-based towards actual interactions with native speakers" (Thorne, 2008, p. 426), engage in "socially mediated construction of knowledge" (Guarda, 2012, p. 17) and, ultimately, take charge of their language learning.

However, to date, research on the development of pragmatic competence in CMC comes with limitations. To begin, the majority of research still looks at the development of English and other European languages, with East Asian languages largely unrepresented. This is unfortunate, seeing as the acquisition of East Asian languages involves the learning of pragmatic norms and associated social values quite different to those found in European languages. Regarding the development of address term use more specifically, Belz and Kinginger (2002, 2003) are the only studies to date to explore this area of pragmatic competence in CMC. These studies found that CMC interaction with native speakers was beneficial in the development of informal/formal pronoun selection in French and German. Interesting as these findings may be, the challenges faced by learners confronted with address term systems in East Asian languages is without doubt far greater, as will become clear below.

As to the second limitation, previous studies concentrated on analyzing the effectiveness of CMC purely within the classroom setting. In the studies by Belz and Kinginger (2002, 2003), for example, whole classes of learners of French and German at US universities were paired with whole classes of English learners at institutions in France and Germany. Although this provided ample opportunities for online communication and the learning of pragmatics, this was in a way that was prescribed by the instructors. Linking language learners in this way and prescribing the means of communication is to some extent an "inauthentic" pedagogical task, and this factor is expected to influence the interactions and language choices that emerge. An additional concern is that the medium that is prescribed by the instructors may be different to that which the learners would choose in the "real world." Participants in Thorne's (2003) study felt that e-mail exchange, the mode decided by the project coordinators, was inconvenient and inefficient for building personal relationships. It thus becomes questionable how much learner's experiences in using pragmatic features in these "inauthentic" media can tell us about learning of the target items and use of these features in "real world" CMC contexts. Kern (2006), citing Warschauer (1998), notes that "online communication has become a normal part of life ... [it should be an] integral aspect of language learning and language use" (p. 185). A shift therefore is required away from seeing CMC as an in-class medium for language teaching, towards seeing it also as one of the primary mediums through which learners encounter the language outside of the classroom.

The need to explore pragmatic development in naturalistic online interaction is particularly important if we are to embrace the "social turn" (Block, 2003) in SLA research and, above all, the increased interest in using sociocultural theory as the prism through which to analyze the use and acquisition of languages. From this perspective, language learning is seen as being inherently social and emerging as language learners participate in the community in which the language is spoken, appropriate the skills needed to operate in this society on a self-regulated basis and gain identities as legitimate speakers of the language. Evidently, analysis of this process should not be confined to the boundaries of the language classroom. In addition, sociocultural theory stresses the importance of seeing human development on the sociohistorical level. The tools by which humans interact with the social-material world are sociohistorically specific, and this is crucial for learning processes (Lantolf, 2006, p.70). Thus, it is important for researchers to embrace the tools

by which students are choosing to engage with the language (be that Facebook, Twitter, etc.) rather than focusing on tools that are imposed by the researcher. Finally, sociocultural perspectives recognize the diversity of learner experiences and the importance of individual agency in determining the trajectory of linguistic acquisition (Thorne, 2000). With this in mind, it becomes crucial to research the ways in which individual learners engage with the language outside of class and foreground the decisions they make regarding who they interact with and how.

The “social turn” in language learning has particularly brought into focus the importance of identity in the process of language learning, and this is one further area where research on pragmatic competence in CMC needs expansion. Research looking at learner identity has frequently shown that “pragmatic knowledge in itself [...] is not sufficient for speakers of a second language to simply go out and perform the language just like a native speaker” (Brown, 2011, p. 97). Despite knowing the pragmatic norms, learners may choose to flout them when they are in opposition to their pre-existing self-image or cultural values (Brown, 2011 for Korean; Du Fon, 1999 for Indonesian; Higgins, 2011 for Swahili; Siegal, 1994 for Japanese). However, to date, only a small number of studies have looked at identity construction in CMC (Black, 2006; Lam, 2004; Thorne, 2003; Yi, 2007). These studies show that CMC provides language learners who may have little off-line contact with the target language culture with an opportunity to establish themselves as legitimate speakers of the language (Thorne, 2003). Block (2007) identifies CMC environments as being an important context where further research regarding the role of identity in second language learning is needed.

With these concerns in mind, we carried out a study looking at the development of pragmatic competence in Korean address terms in naturalistic CMC. Korean address terms represent an excellent focus for the study of pragmatics in CMC environments for a number of reasons. Firstly, their application is complex and reliant on underlying social factors. Secondly, the use of address terms is an area of Korean language that is closely tied up with the negotiation of a “Korean” identity. By addressing elders with honorific address forms, for example, a hierarchical social structure is perpetuated and traditional neo-Confucian social values are upheld, such as *kyenglosasang* ‘respecting the elderly’ and *cangyuyuse* ‘the old and the young know their place’ (Brown, 2011)<sup>1</sup>. Given these strong connections with Korean modes of social interaction, the use of address terms becomes a particularly powerful site for the negotiation of identity.

The specific research goals are as follows. First, we set out to investigate how pragmatic competence in address terms is demonstrated through naturalistic CMC data. The second goal was to look more specifically at how the development of pragmatic competence in CMC went beyond or differed from classroom learning. We looked at how learners understood important differences between the address forms they experienced and used in CMC environments with those they encountered in their textbooks and classrooms. The third and final goal of our study was to look at the role address term use in CMC environments played in shaping learner identity.

## THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

### *Korean Address Terms*

This section introduces Korean address terms, the connections between address terms and morphological honorifics and the place of address terms in KSL<sup>2</sup> (Korean as a second language) curriculums.

### Introducing Korean Address Terms

The Korean address form system comprises (a) pronouns and (b) nominal forms (personal names, kinship terms and other titles). Unlike in European languages such as English, the use of personal names (especially first names) is heavily restricted. Instead of calling someone by their name, Korean speakers often prefer the use of a kinship term or title. The

use of second-person pronouns is also very limited. Although there are as many as five second-person pronouns, there is no deferential or polite pronoun (such as French *vous* or German *Sie*) for use towards status superiors and adult strangers, for example. Instead, nominal forms are frequently used in situations where English would use “you”.

The five Korean second-person pronouns are *ne*, *caney*, *tangsin*, *kutay* and *caki* (Brown, 2011; Park, 2005). *Ne* is only used towards intimates of equal/inferior age and towards children. *Caney* is only used non-reciprocally by older adults towards younger adults. *Tangsin* is most commonly used between married couples in their forties or above. It also tends to be used as a deliberate way of being disrespectful and rude to someone when involved in an argument. *Kutay* is an antiquated form found mostly in songs and poetry. *Caki* is used by younger couples as a sign of affection. As noted above, when addressing a superior or adult stranger, none of these pronoun forms can be used and thus a nominal form needs to be used instead.

We now provide more information about the use of nominal forms. Starting with personal names, as a general rule these can only be used towards someone the same age or younger. In such contexts, a personal name may appear as: (a) a bare form, (b) suffixed by the vocative *-a/ya*, (c) followed by the address term *ssi*, or (d) followed by the honorific suffix *-nim*. Whereas patterns (a) and (b) tend to be limited to intimate relationships, patterns (c) and (d) are used prototypically to mark a degree of distance. However, as noted by Kim-Renaud (2012) the usage of *ssi* (pattern 3) is now spreading to more intimate relationships, including dating contexts. The honorific suffix *-nim* (pattern 4) traditionally attaches to titles. Its usage with personal names is a recent innovation still considered non-standard. However, it flourishes in CMC, where it attaches not only to personal names, but also online usernames and practically any reference form (Lee 2009; Park 2006).<sup>3</sup>

In situations where personal names are not appropriate, occupation/position-based titles or family-based kinship terms are used instead. Occupation/position based titles are used frequently in professional environments such as the workplace or school. Examples of workplace titles include *silcang* ‘section chief’, *kwacang* ‘department head’ and *sacang* ‘boss’. These can be made respectful by adding the honorific suffix *-nim*: *silcang-nim* ‘esteemed section chief’, *kwacang-nim* ‘esteemed department head’, and *sacang-nim* ‘esteemed boss’.

Kinship terms are used not just within the family but also towards intimates of superior age. Intimates of marginally older age are addressed as ‘older brother’ (*hyeng* if the speaker is a man; *oppa* if the speaker is female) or ‘older sister’ (*nwuna*; *enni*). When the age difference is larger, *imo* ‘maternal aunt’ and *samchon* ‘uncle’ are used in similar ways.

As should be obvious from this description, Korean address terms display quite different orientations to those found in English or other European languages. In short, whereas English allows for universal use of the pronoun “you” and prefers the use of personal names (particularly first names) in many contexts, both these patterns are heavily restricted in Korean. Instead, Korean orients towards the use of titles and kinship terms. Based on this, English can be described as “name and pronoun oriented”, whereas we describe Korean as “title and kinship term oriented” (see Hwang, 1991<sup>4</sup>).

The Korean preference for titles and kinship terms is steeped in culture-specific social meanings. As previously mentioned, the hierarchical patterns of usage of these forms uphold traditional neo-Confucian social values. In addition, the preference for titles or kinship terms over personal names places emphasis on one’s position or role rather than individual identity, thus reinforcing the collective patterns of Korean social interactions. In particular, the use of kinship terms to address non-kin embodies an ideology of viewing society as similar to a large extended family. Indeed, Park (1975) claims that people in Korea “seem to have the tendency to regard almost any organized social institution as a type of family structure” (p. 5). These fictive family structures embody specific roles and responsibilities for their members. Younger members show respect towards more senior members and acquiesce to their wishes. The elder members, in turn, take care of and/or provide for the junior members.

As a final note to conclude this section, the fact that Korean permits (or even requires) nominal forms to be used as if they were second-person pronouns has some important implications for studies of address terms and their acquisition by L2 learners. Although such usage is highly marked in English and most European languages, it may be fairly common cross-linguistically. Indeed, Oliveira (2005, 2013) notes that nominals are frequently used in this way in Portuguese. The fact that some languages allow nominal forms to function as pronouns may mean that it is cross-linguistically more valid for researchers to look at pronouns and nominal forms in tandem as “address terms” (Oliveira 2013).

### Interaction of Address Terms with Morphological Honorifics

Previous studies of pragmatic competence in Korean have often focused on the acquisition of morphological honorifics (Brown, 2011) rather than address terms. Although we focus on the latter, some brief notes are required regarding the relationship between the two.

Korean possesses a number of morphological devices (primarily verb endings) that are used to signal the social relationship between the speaker and the hearer (see Brown, 2011). Although these forms are complex, a basic distinction can be made between those that are honorific (and used to signal respect to elders) and those that are non-honorific (and used to signal intimacy). In Korean layman terms, these two categories are known as *contaymal* ‘respect speech’ and *panmal* ‘half speech’ respectively. *Contaymal* sentences terminate with *-yo* or *-supnita* verb endings, whereas *panmal* sentences end in *-ta* and *-e*.

The use of *contaymal* and *panmal* correlates to some extent with choice of address terms. Park (2004) notes that *panmal* verb endings co-occur with the pronouns *ne* and *caney* as well as given names suffixed by the vocative *-a/ya*. *Contaymal* endings, on the other hand, co-occur with titles, kinship terms and *ssi*. However, as demonstrated in Yoo (1998), these co-occurrence patterns are fluid rather than fixed.

### Representation of Address Terms in Korean Textbooks

KSL textbooks tend to represent address terms in a highly simplified way and do not properly represent the title and kinship orientation of Korean. Most textbooks predominantly feature the use of personal names followed by *ssi*. Indeed, Brown (2010) found that this pattern accounted for 74.7% of all address terms appearing in three popular textbooks (p. 46). In contrast, titles (3.6%) and kinship terms (5.3%) appear at low frequencies.<sup>5</sup>

Although textbook writers may perceive *ssi* as being “safe” and “easy”, it comes with limitations and the descriptions of it in textbooks are potentially confusing. There is a tendency for *ssi* to be described as a universally polite form (e.g., “polite title for name” in King & Yeon 2000) and for the form to only appear in sentences that feature honorific speech styles. Describing *ssi* as “polite” is potentially misleading, given the fact that it is only customarily used towards those of equal or younger age — it is certainly not a polite way to address a status superior. Moreover, this portrayal is out of touch with the fact that *ssi* may now appear in certain intimate relationships and with non-honorific speech styles (Kim-Renaud, 2012).

### METHOD

This section introduces the participants and data collection techniques.

#### Participants

Four Korean learners based at a UK university participated in the study. As shown in Table 1, two of them (Jennifer, Grace) had novice-level proficiency and two (Jane, John) were intermediate level.<sup>6</sup> Whereas Jennifer was a BA student majoring in Korean, Jane and John were pursuing MAs in Korean Studies and Grace was studying MA Ethnomusicology, specializing in Korean traditional string instruments. Jennifer had never visited Korea, but Jane and John had both visited on several short trips and Grace had worked in Korea for

two years as an ESL teacher (although she only studied Korean intermittently while in Korea). Notably, whereas the three female learners were in their twenties, the male learner (John) was 49 and was married to a South Korean national. These four participants were chosen due to the fact that all four reported frequent use of CMC to interact with Korean-speaking acquaintances. Since the proficiency levels and ages of the participants show variation, it should be underlined that the data is being viewed as four case studies.

**Table 1**

Overview of Participants

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Level of Korean</b>	<b>CMC tools used</b>
1	Jennifer	Polish	20	Novice High	Facebook
2	Grace	American	24	Novice High	Email, Facebook
3	Jane	British	22	Intermediate High	Skype, Facebook
4	John	British	49	Intermediate Low	Kakao Talk, Twitter, Facebook, Email

The sample size, as with other studies in this theoretical tradition (Ortega & Iberri-Shea, 2005), is small and the study does not purport to make broad, population-wide conclusions. However, a small sample size embodies advantages. It allows for a qualitative approach and microanalysis of discourse, providing richer insights into language usage patterns not detected by large scale quantitative studies. In addition, by focusing on the learners as individuals with their own unique attitudes and learning histories, issues relating to how identity shapes language learning are addressed in fine detail.

As shown in Table 1, the participants used several different CMC tools (email, Facebook, Skype, Twitter and Kakao Talk – a mobile messenger application for smartphones that is extremely popular in South Korea). This allowed us to gather data from various CMC channels, thus enabling us to provide a more rounded picture of L2 Korean CMC usage. We did not uncover any notable ways that these different CMC mediums resulted in different use of address terms. However, some of the participants noted that using Facebook does not require frequent use of address forms, since the interlocutor's name is already displayed. The ways that different CMC mediums present names (or usernames) and what influence this has on the use of address terms would be an interesting target for future research.

### **Data Collection**

Two methods of data collection were applied. First, for the duration of the research, the participants provided the researchers with electronic or printed transcripts of their CMC interactions. These transcripts were then analyzed, coded for the appearance of address terms and individual sections of interest were subjected to discourse analysis.

Second, the learners met with the first author for biweekly retrospective interviews. Learners provided further contextual information about the transcripts and gave verbal reports explaining their use of specific forms of address. In order not to contaminate the results, no feedback of any kind was given by the researcher.

In the analysis of these interviews, rather than seeing learner explanations of their use of address forms as purely veridical, we viewed them as situated and contested accounts of reality. From this viewpoint, it is natural that situational factors (such as the fact that they were being interviewed by a native-speaker researcher) should influence the

way that the learners accounted for their use of address terms. Despite this limitation, interview data is still “symptomatic” (Kvale, 1996) of the experiences and emotions of the participants towards the phenomenon under analysis, here the manifestation of pragmatic competence in the use of address forms.

Regarding the time period over which data was collected, it should be noted that it was not an explicit goal of the project to measure development of pragmatic competence longitudinally. However, in order to collect sufficient data, we ended up tracking the learners over a three month period, which did allow for limited observations as to how pragmatic knowledge changes over time (particularly for the novice learners). We recognize, however, that this falls short of what Ortega and Iberri-Shea (2005) describe as a “full longitudinal perspective” (p. 26) which would normally involve a period ranging from four months to four years.

Over the three month period, we collected a total of 110 conversations involving 31 different interlocutors. Table 2 summarizes what types of interactions were collected from each individual participant, dividing the information according to the contextual factors of gender and age. In Table 3, we provide information as to how much data was collected by itemizing the number of words collected from each participant.

**Table 2**  
Number and Identity of Interlocutors

Participant		Gender		Age		Nationality		Total
		Male	Female	Same age/ younger	With older	Korean	Overseas Korean	
1	Jennifer	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2 (100%)	0 (0%)	2
2	Grace	3 (33.3%)	6 (66.7%)	0 (0%)	9 (100%)	8 (89%)	1 (11%)	9
3	Jane	0 (0%)	4 (100%)	2 (50%)	2 (50%)	4 (100%)	0 (0%)	4
4	John	2 (12.5%)	14 (87.5%)	16 (100%)	0 (0%)	16 (100%)	0 (0%)	16
TOTAL		6	25	18	13	30	1	31

**Table 3**  
Quantity of Data

	Number of Interactions	Korean words	English words	Total words
1	Jennifer	438	103	541
2	Grace	226	0	226
3	Jane	994	975	1969
4	John	2468	311	2779
TOTAL		4126	1389	5515

## Data Analysis

Analysis of the data proceeds as follows. The first section below provides an overview of the different address forms found in the data using descriptive statistics. Then, in the following section, we examine each of the four learners in turn as individual case studies.

### Overview of Data

A quantitative overview of the data shows important individual differences between the four learners. Jennifer and John showed a preference for English-style name and pronoun orientation (although Jennifer also used some kinship terms, which John did not). Interestingly, John was the only learner who used the *ssi* pattern prescribed by Korean textbooks; indeed, this accounted for 62.5% of his total usage. Grace and Jane, on the other hand, tended to avoid personal names and pronouns and showed preference for title and kinship orientation. It was notable that the second person pronoun *tangsin* appeared three times in the data considering the restrictions on this form in native speaker talk.

**Table 4**

Overview of Address Terms in Data

Participant	Personal names				Titles + <i>-nim</i> *	Kinship terms	Pronouns		TOTAL
	Bare	+ <i>-ssi</i>	+ <i>-a/ya</i>	+ <i>-nim</i>			<i>Ne</i>	<i>Tangsin</i>	
1 Jennifer	15 (44.1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	6 (17.6%)	13 (38.2%)	0 (0%)	34 (100%)
2 Grace	1 (12.5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (12.5%)	4 (50%)	0 (0%)	2 (25%)	8 (100%)
3 Jane	1 (5%)	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	18 (90%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	20 (100%)
4 John	26 (25%)	65 (62.5%)	0 (0%)	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	0 (0%)	13 (12.5%)	1 (1%)	104 (100%)
TOTAL	43 (25.9%)	65 (39.2%)	1 (0.6%)	1 (0.6%)	2 (1.2%)	28 (16.9%)	26 (15.7%)	3 (1.8%)	166 (100%)
				66.3%		17.5%			

\* There were no occurrences of titles without the honorific *-nim* suffix.

### Case Studies

We look at the four case studies in turn, beginning with the two novice-level learners, Jennifer and Grace, before moving to the two intermediate-level learners, Jane and John.

**Jennifer.** Jennifer, the only BA student and non-English L1 speaker participating in the study, became interested in the Korean language through TV dramas. Despite only having novice-high competence, she regularly uses Facebook to communicate in Korean. For this project, she provided conversations with two interlocutors, one male and one female, who were both older than her.

As summarized above, Jennifer showed a preference for “English style” address terms, namely personal names and the pronoun *ne*. Given that all interactions were with interlocutors older than her, this preference seems to contrast with native speaker norms since such forms tends to be limited to age-rank equals or subordinates. However, the transcripts provided evidence that Jennifer was starting to acquire the title and kinship term orientation of Korean. In particular, she was becoming aware of the social meanings of kinship terms, the use of which she described as “kinda girly” and “kinda cute”. In the following extract, Jennifer experiments by addressing Young (an intimate five years her senior) as *enni* ‘older sister’ for the first time (line 2). It is notable that Jennifer is also using intimate *panmal* speech styles; earlier transcripts from her interactions with Young had mostly been in *contaymal*.



## (1) Jennifer and Young (Facebook synchronous chat)

- 1 Young: [...] 제니퍼는 에세이 힘내!!!!  
[...] Jennifer-nun eyseyi himnay  
[...] *Work hard on your essay, Jennifer-[INTIMATE]!*
- 2 Jennifer: 응 고마워! 언니 ㅋㅋㅋ  
ung komawe! enni kh kh kh  
*Ok thanks-[INTIMATE]! Enni (laughter)*
- 3 Young: ㅋㅋㅋ 하지마!!! 언니 하지마!! ㅋㅋㅋ나이 많은거 싫어ㅋㅋㅋ  
kh kh kh haci-ma!!! Enni hacima kh kh kh nai manh-un-ke silhe kh kh kh  
*(laughter) Don't call me that!!! Don't call me enni (laughter) I dislike being older-[INTIMATE]! (laughter)*
- 4 Jennifer: ㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋ I have NEVER called you onni [= enni] so far, weird...  
kh kh kh kh kh kh kh  
*(laughter)*
- 5 Young: ㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋ you don't need to say that!!!! Please kkkkk  
kh kh kh kh kh kh kh  
*(laughter)*
- 6 Jennifer: really? 왜? You dont like?  
way?  
*Why-[INTIMATE]?*
- 7 Young: I feel rly getting old when im called 언니[enni] Just call me 'Young' as  
YOUNG!!KK
- 8 Jennifer: ㅋㅋㅋㅋ  
kh kh kh kh  
*(laughter)*
- 9 Young: 히히히 anyway 화이팅 에세이 and rly hope to see you tomo<3  
hi hi hi hwaithing eyseyi  
*(laughter) work hard on your essay!*
- 10 Jennifer: 응, 잘 자! 잘자, 동생!  
ung calca calca tongsayng  
*Okay, good night-[INTIMATE]! Good night, tongsayng-[INTIMATE]!*
- 11 Young: ㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋ[...]  
kh kh kh kh kh kh [...]  
*(laughter) [...]*
- 12 Jennifer: 딸  
ttal  
*Daughter*
- 13 Young: you are very quick learner!! Love you<3!!
- 14 Jennifer: 잘자 임마 [= 엄마]  
calca imma [= emma]  
*Good night, mom-[INTIMATE]*
- 15 Young: kkkkkkkkkkkkkk 응 나잇나잇 <3333  
ung nais nais  
*Okay, night night-[INTIMATE]*

It is notable that Jennifer's use of *enni* despite appearing to be pragmatically appropriate for addressing an intimate of older age earns an extremely negative reaction from Young (line 3). Young explains that *enni* makes her feel old (line 7), while her name 'Young' naturally makes her feel young! Although this reason may be justified, refusing Jennifer's use of *enni* also represents a rejection on Young's part of the establishment of a hierarchical Korean-style older-younger relationship and works to maintain an equal friendship based on mutual use of given names. Brown (2011) notes that L1 parties may quite frequently reject L2 initiation of hierarchy-based address terms and/or honorifics in

this way, since they do not necessarily see their relationships with non-Korean acquaintances as fitting into or requiring Korean-style hierarchical patterns of interaction.

Jennifer then playfully uses three other kinship terms towards Young. She addresses her as *tongsayng* 'younger sibling' (line 10) and *ttal* 'daughter' (line 12), seemingly as part of a humorous attempt to make Young feel "younger", before addressing her as *emma* 'mom' (line 14). These attract laughter from Young as well as positive evaluations ('you are a quick learner'). In other data collected from Jennifer, we see her playfully using the kinship term *acessi* 'uncle' towards a 26-year old male. Since *acessi* is typically reserved for married men in their thirties or above, this represented a way for Jennifer to "make jokes." "It's really funny", commented Jennifer in the interviews, "he always gets very angry — 'I am not *acessi*'". Jennifer's playful uses of these terms establish her as someone knowledgeable of Korean kinship terms and confident enough to use them in play.

In contrast to KSL textbooks, no instances of *ssi* appeared in Jennifer's transcripts. "I never use it", reported Jennifer, "my Korean classmates call me Jennifer-*ssi* [...] it feels very bookish". She associated this form solely with usage in the language classroom and had learned through CMC that it was not such a common address term outside of pedagogical settings.

**Grace.** Grace was an MA student of ethnomusicology researching Korean traditional string instruments. She had previously spent two years in Korea working as an English teacher but had only studied Korean intermittently, thus remaining at novice-high level. She spent considerable time talking to her friends in Korea and the USA through Facebook and email, though English was the more common language for communication.

Grace had become accustomed to the use of Korean kinship terms (such as *enni* 'older sister' and *oppa* 'older brother'). The comparatively high frequency at which she used these terms (50%) and the positive attitudes she expressed towards them ("kinda cute") gave the impression that she was aware of the Korean preference for titles and kinship terms. However, closer inspection reveals that the patterns by which Grace employed these kinship terms did not always follow Korean norms. In interactions with her Korean professor (Professor Kang) from the USA, Grace used *enni* and reciprocated non-honorific *panmal*, explaining that they were close "friends". In Korean culture, the word for 'friend' (*chinkwu*) is normally reserved for referring to someone of equal age and cannot generally apply to a relationship with a status superior, such as a professor. Even if the relationship becomes intimate, a professor is always an object of respect and is addressed as *kyoswunim* 'esteemed professor' and with honorific *contaymal*. This is not to say, however, that Grace's use of *enni* and *panmal* in this context was "inappropriate". Certainly, we do not see any evidence that Professor Kang evaluates it as such, since she never comments on it or displays discomfort. Here, Brown's (2011) observation that Korean L1-L2 interactions do not always follow the norms and expectations of Korean native-speaker interactions seems to apply. Particularly since Grace and Professor Kang had become acquainted in the States and spoke to each other in English as well as Korean, their relationship only partially followed Korean-style modes of interaction. For these two speakers, the use of *enni* had become appropriate as it showed a degree of Korean-style respect for the professor's status, but also allowed for the development of English-style intimacy.

The data shows clear signs that Grace's understanding of when to use *enni* as opposed to more respectful terms was developing through CMC. Grace submitted several transcripts from interactions with her *kemwunko* (Korean string instrument) instructor Ms. Kim (who was 6-7 years older than Grace), who had taught her during her time in Korea. In interactions collected at the start of the research such as (2), Grace uses *enni* (line 4), the casual greeting term *annyeong* (line 1) and some *panmal* (line 7). In short, Grace was attempting to apply the same register of language that she used with Professor Kang. Also note how Grace asks Ms. Kim a personal question (line 2: 'Do you have a boyfriend?'), which adds to the impression that Grace is addressing Ms. Kim as an intimate rather than as a teacher who needs to be shown deference.

## (2) Grace and Ms. Kim (Facebook asynchronous chat, February 26)

- 1 Grace: 안녕!  
annyeng  
*Hi-[INTIMATE]!*
- 2 실례합니다[= 실례합니다], 그런데 남자친구가 있어요?  
Sillyeypapnita [= sillyeyhapnita], kulentey namcachinkwu-ka iss-e-yo  
*Excuse me-[DEFERENTIAL], but do you have a boyfriend-[POLITE]?*
- 3 고문고[= 거문고]가 사진 예뻐요~  
Komwunko [= kemwunko]-ka sacin yeyppe-yo  
*(You look) pretty playing kemwunko (Korean string instrument) in the picture -[POLITE]*
- 4 언니 예뻐요 ^^  
enni yeyppe-yo  
*Enni (you are) pretty-[POLITE] (smile)*
- 5 요즘 자주 고문고가[= 거문고를] 쳐요?  
yocum cacwu komwunko-ka [= kemwunko-lul] chye-yo  
*(Do you) often play kemwunko these days-[POLITE]?*
- 6 안녕히 가세요.  
annyenghi kasey-yo  
*Good bye-[POLITE].*
- 7 답장줘 [=답장줘].  
tamcangcwe [=tapcangcwe]  
*Get back to me-[INTIMATE].*

When Ms. Kim replied to the message from Grace, she readily answered the question as to whether she had a boyfriend (*cikum namca chinkwu-ka iss-kin isse-yo* 'I do have a boyfriend, actually'), hinting that she did not find the question particularly uncomfortable. Crucially, she concluded her response by supplying a list of corrections of Grace's Korean sentences.<sup>7</sup> Although most of these corrections concerned grammar and spelling, she also corrected the intimate *tapcang cw-e* 'get back to me' into the polite speech style *tapcang cwe-yo*. In addition, Ms. Kim made no attempts to downgrade to *panmal* herself, adhering to *contaymal* throughout. This represents a clear signal that, unlike the professor in the USA, Korea-based Ms. Kim was keen to adhere to Korean-style modes of interaction. In addition, the use of corrective feedback itself acts as a signal that she was keen to maintain her identity as "teacher".

In later interactions, we see Grace addressing Ms. Kim in a qualitatively different register. Whereas in the previous extract Grace used *enni* and *annyeng*, she now uses *sensayngnim* 'esteemed teacher' and the honorific greeting *annyenghaseyo* (line 1):

## (3) Grace and Ms. Kim (Facebook asynchronous chat, April 21)

- 1 Grace: 선생님 안녕하세요!  
sensayngnim, annyenghase-yo  
*Esteemed teacher, hello-[POLITE]!*
- 2 당신이 보고 싶어요.  
tangsin-i po-ko siph-e-yo  
*(I) miss you-[POLITE].*

However, this short extract nonetheless displays other potentially inappropriate language. In line 2, Grace uses the second-person pronoun *tangsin* 'you', which, as previously noted, has restricted usage and does not represent a respectful way to address a teacher. Interestingly, despite her habit of correcting Grace's Korean, Ms. Kim does not comment on this usage of *tangsin*. A potential reason is that Ms. Kim may perceive it as first language influence (i.e. an attempt to translate English 'you') rather than an attempt to initiate a casual register of language.

This analysis shows that CMC can be a fertile environment for L2 learners to acquire the social meanings of address forms, including those that are honorific. In addition, the fact that Grace altered her use of address forms and politeness level after receiving negative feedback suggests that explicit correction can play an active role in the learning of pragmatics in CMC. However, as we see in the way that Ms. Kim chose not to correct *tangsin*, this feedback is inconsistent and is seemingly influenced by expectations regarding the learners' Korean proficiency and L1 background.

**Jane.** We now discuss the first of two intermediate-level participants: Jane. A UK-national and MA Korean Studies student, Jane had studied Korean for three and a half years and had reached intermediate-high proficiency. She regularly communicated with Koreans via Skype, Facebook and e-mail, as well as keeping a Korean blog. Many of her interlocutors were intimates of senior age and this was reflected in Jane's high usage (90%) of kinship terms. Although this suggests that Jane had adopted the title and kinship term orientation of Korean, this had not been without its struggles, which are captured well in the CMC data and interviews.

Jane's most regular CMC conversation partner was a woman in her 40s (Ms. Kwak), who had been Jane's "host mother" during a previous homestay in Korea. As can be seen in (4), Jane addressed Ms. Kwak with the kinship term *imo* '(maternal) auntie'. Whereas Jane uses honorific *contaymal*, she receives non-honorific *panmal* from Ms. Kwak.

(4) Jane and Ms. Kwak (Skype synchronous chat)

- 1 Ms. Kwak: 거기있니?  
keki issni  
*Are (you) there-[INTIMATE]?*  
[...]
- 2 Jane: 이모 더 많이 보고 싶어요.  
imo te manhi poko siphe-yo  
*Auntie, I miss (you) more-[POLITE]*

Given their age-rank relationship and degree of intimacy, the use of *imo* and non-reciprocal honorific speech reflects Korean interactional norms. Interestingly, the retrospective interviews revealed that Ms. Kwak had deliberately asked Jane to use *imo*, explaining that she felt a close affinity with Jane's mother (even though the two had never met). In other words, Ms. Kwak felt a bond with Jane's mother similar to that of a sister and thus saw Jane (albeit in fictive terms) as a niece. Jane reported that she accepted this pattern of address terms, as it seemed to fit her relationship with Ms. Kwak: "just instantly I thought yeah [...] that's right, that's fine."

When conversing with female intimates of more marginally older age, Jane followed Korean-style title and pronoun orientation and referred to them as *enni* 'elder sister'. Jane reported that this had also been initiated by her acquaintances, who asked her to use *enni* towards them. However, using *enni* still felt unnatural to her ("I haven't got used to it"). Despite this, she had endeavored to use it as she saw it as an effective device to build Korean-style relationships.

Although some of Jane's acquaintances encouraged her to use *enni*, other excerpts show Jane's use of the term garnishing negative reactions. In (5), when Jane addresses Yoon-ji (an intimate two years older than her) as *enni*, she is told that it feels "weird":

(5) Jane and Yoon-ji (Skype synchronous chat)

- 1 Jane: ^^ 언니도 새해 복 많이 받으세요.  
enni-to sayhay pok manhi patusey-yo  
(smile) *Happy New Year to (you) too-[POLITE]*.
- 2 Yoon-ji: 제인이 언니라고 하니까 뭔가 이상해 ㅋㅋㅋ  
jane-i ennilako hanikka mwenka isanghay kh kh kh

*It feels awkward that Jane (you) call (me) enni-[INTIMATE]. (laughter)*

As detailed previously, the use of kinship terms embodies specific roles and responsibilities for the parties involved (i.e. the younger party shows respect; the older party provides guidance). However, these roles and responsibilities do not always apply to L1-L2 relationships, such as that between Yoon-ji and Jane. When Jane was asked during the retrospective interviews to comment on the interaction above, she described how her relationship with Yoon-ji (and the identities that the two of them possess) did not seem to match the dynamics of Korean fictive sibling roles:

#### (6) Retrospective Interview

1 Jane: Yeah, yeah, Yoon-ji! I think with friends that are quite closer to my age they can feel that I am older than I am, maybe. Um I am quite tall and generally quite mature, (laugh) most of the time. So they can feel like, Oh! she's not like this kind of younger person. Maybe I don't fit so neatly into the kind of age differentiation, but also I think like because I am kind of from a different kind of culture or whatever it can seem strange. [...] But also Yoon-ji's interesting because she- everyone thinks she's Japanese when they see her and she went to a high school in Japan and she's gone to a university in Japan. So she's got quite an international outlook, I guess as well, yeah. So maybe that will change that a little as well. But yeah, yeah, she's quite small and she's quite cute. But she has an attitude as well, but yeah that's why I guess it makes it kinda weird.

According to Jane's account, neither she nor Yoon-ji possessed the attributes associated with a Korean-style younger sister/older sister relationship. Jane did not fit into the "Korean younger sister" role as she was "tall", "mature" and "from another kind of culture". Yoon-ji, on the other hand, did not match the "Korean older sister" identity as she was "small", "cute", looked "Japanese" and had "quite an international outlook". Thus, we see in this instance that superficially "native-like" usages of address terms may not always be perceived as appropriate in L1-L2 encounters when the dynamics of the relationship do not match the culturally-specific meanings of these forms. Adopting the use of Korean kinship terms on its own, it would seem, is not necessarily sufficient for Korean-style social relationships to be established.

Although Jane was thus still involved in a struggle to establish "appropriate" use of kinship terms, her knowledge of address forms in general had surpassed what was taught in Korean classes. Indicative of this, she never used *ssi*, except with "fellow language learners" as "a little bit of a joke". Evidently, she no longer associated this pattern with real-world Korean-style relationships.

**John.** UK-national John is a part-time MA Korean Studies student with low intermediate proficiency, who was 49 years and married to a South Korean national. He used Facebook, Kakao Talk and Twitter almost every day to contact Korean acquaintances, mostly (former) female students from the language school where he worked. John's age and the fact that his interlocutors were younger and female are important reasons why his use of address terms was different to the other learners.

John displayed a strong preference for personal names followed by *ssi* (62.59%):

#### (7) John and Sujin (Asynchronous Facebook chat)

1 John: 어 수진씨, 잘 지내요?  
e Sujin-ssi, cal cinay-yo  
*Yeah-[INTIMATE] (I am well) Sujin-ssi, are (you) keeping well-[POLITE]?*

On a superficial level, John's use of *ssi* appears to coincide with its high occurrence in KSL. This impression is reinforced by the interview data, during which John mentioned that one of the reasons why he "liked" using *ssi* was due to his experiences in Korean class ("I

just like the sound of putting the *ssi* on it and we did it together as students, John-*ssi*, James-*ssi*”). He was less familiar with the pragmatics of other patterns of personal name usage, such as the vocative *-a/ya*, which he associated strongly with “calling somebody” (“I would use it if [...] I want to make some sort of announcement, ‘hey hey hey’”).

However, closer inspection of the data revealed that John’s usage of *ssi* differed not only from KSL texts, but also potentially from native speaker interactions. As described previously, the majority of textbooks introduces *ssi* as a feature of “polite” speech and present it alongside *contaymal* speech styles. However, in his interactions with female students John used *ssi* consistently, but often switched between *contaymal* and *panmal*. In the following conversation with Jinhee (who was 24 years old), John uses *ssi* alongside *panmal* (line 1) and *contaymal* (line 5).

(8) John and Jinhee (Asynchronous Twitter chat)

- 1 John: 불쌍한 진희씨. [...] 채식주의자이야?  
pwulssanghan cinhuy-ssi. [...] chaysikcwuuycaya ?  
*Poor Jinhee-ssi.[...] Are (you) a vegetarian- [INTIMATE]?*
- 2 [...] Loving Hut 식당에 한번 가 보세요!  
[...] Loving Hut siktangey hanpen ka pose-yo  
[...] Try Loving Hut restaurant -[POLITE]!
- 3 Jinhee: 응 오늘도 나물만 먹었어 비빔밥이 주식이야^^ㅎㅎ  
ung onulto namulman mekess-e pipimpap-i cwusik-i-ya  
*Yeah, (I) only ate vegetables again today-[INTIMATE]. Mixed vegetable rice is (my) main diet-[INTIMATE] (smile)*
- 4 loving hut? 어디있어?  
eti iss-e  
*Loving Hut? Where is it-[INTIMATE]?*
- 5 John: 진희씨, lovinghut.kr/kr 를 [= 를] 보세요.  
Jinhee-ssi, -lwul [= lul] posey-yo  
*Jinhee-[POLITE], check out loviunghut.kr/kr-[POLITE]*

During the interviews, John spoke about his reasons for switching between *panmal* and *contaymal*. He was aware that he could use non-honorific language towards younger acquaintances, but that he sometimes found this “uncomfortable”, particularly when it was not reciprocated (see below). In addition, having learned Korean predominantly in a classroom setting, he was more accustomed to honorific *contaymal* (“the majority of stuff you get it from textbooks seems to be *-yo* form, sometimes *-supnita* and very infrequently *panmal*”). He also reported a tendency to switch to *contaymal* in certain set expressions where he was perhaps less familiar with the *panmal* form, which may explain his use of *contaymal* in the imperative sentences in lines 2 and 5.

Although limits in John’s pragmatic competence, thus influenced the “level” of language that he used, his use of *ssi* and shifts to *contaymal* also played active social functions. Namely, by retaining these forms and avoiding the use of pure non-honorific speech, John was able to maintain a degree of politeness towards his younger acquaintances and avoid sounding too condescending. This strategy aligned well with the way that he saw his relationships with these acquaintances, who he described as his “friends”. As previously noted, in Korean culture “friendship” generally only pertains to relationships between those of equal age. Since John was more than 20 years older and had made these acquaintances through his job at the language school, in a Korean context this would necessitate maintaining hierarchical modes of language use and social interaction. But by using *ssi* and *contaymal* towards these females, John was actively signaling that he respected them as equals and was not trying to place himself above them.

As an additional or alternative strategy for encouraging more egalitarian modes of interaction in his CMC conversations, John would encourage his acquaintances to use

*panmal*. Since using *panmal* towards elders would be heavily taboo in Korean culture, some of the acquaintances, such as Shinae (23 years old), were reluctant to do this:

(9) Retrospective Interview

1 John: About a year ago I kind of felt a little bit uncomfortable that I was using *panmal*, but I was getting this -yo form back [from Shinae] and I wanted to say, "look, you know we are both friends, why don't we just both use *panmal*". But she couldn't do it, she couldn't do it. I kind of you know not being that sensitive to Korean culture I kind of thought why not it's- it's English culture. We are friends. We don't need to be so conscious about the age difference, but uh when I asked her more about it [...] she's not comfortable using *panmal* you know with me as an older person.

John's suggestion that Shinae use *contaymal* was couched in the assumption that they were operating in "English culture" where "we don't need to be so conscious of the age difference". Shinae, on the other hand, applied Korean norms in rejecting the use of *panmal* towards an "older person".

However, other acquaintances were more open to the idea of using *panmal* towards John. In example 8, it is notable that Jinhee addresses John in *panmal* in lines 3-4. Jinhee had a sister – Jinyoung – who also addressed John in this way. John reported that he had "no problem with it", although he added that it annoyed his Korean wife, who saw it as "rude" and "disrespectful". Whereas John's wife (like Shinae) viewed this use of *panmal* through the prism of Korean interactional norms (where it would be strongly taboo), Jinhee and Jinyoung did not see their relationships with John as fitting these patterns. In part, the reason for this could simply be John's non-Korean identity. Rather than applying Korean norms of interaction to their relationship with John, they applied English-style expectations, perhaps belying a preconceived idea that John's native language and culture lacked honorific forms and the need to respect elders. In addition, the way that John interacted with them probably reinforced the idea that he was not someone who needed to be treated like an "elder". Being an "elder" entails adopting a certain role and retaining a degree of aloofness from juniors. Contrary to this, John attempted to interact with these females as a casual friend by, for example, by proving recommendations of vegan restaurants (example 8).

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

We conclude the paper by summarizing the major finding in relation to the three research goals and presenting the wider implications.

The first goal was to investigate pragmatic competence in Korean address forms and how this competence was manifested in naturalistic CMC. Given the relatively low levels of the learners involved, it is not surprising that the data shows all four to possess incomplete pragmatic competence in address terms. Considering the novice level learners, the data captures the early attempts of Jennifer to address native speaker interlocutors using kinship terms and Grace's realization that her Korean teacher preferred *sensayngnim* 'esteemed teacher' to *enni* 'older sister'. As for the intermediate learners, although their patterns of address term usage had become more fixed, Jane and John nonetheless struggled at times to establish what "appropriateness" meant for them as non-native speakers of Korean, a point we return to in discussions of "identity" below.

The way that these four learners used address terms was shaped and restricted by their limited pragmatic competence. However, within this limited competence, the data shows that the learners made skillful decisions to modulate the social meanings indexed by their address term usage. John, for example, used *ssi* (and shifting between *panmal* and *contaymal*) as tools for establishing more egalitarian relationships with younger female acquaintances.

Although the data was not strictly longitudinal, it demonstrates that CMC is a fertile ground for learning the pragmatics of Korean address forms. On the most basic level, CMC was providing these learners with opportunities to broaden their discourse options in ways that would not be available without access to CMC. For example, without CMC, it is unlikely that Grace would have contacted her former teachers or that John would have kept in touch on a daily basis with former students from his language school. Using Korean frequently in a range of different social contexts presented a host of learning opportunities and occasions for learners to make use of a wider range of address terms. Returning to the case of Grace, the fact that she was able to keep in touch with her former teacher Ms. Kim ultimately allowed her to reassess her own use of kinship terms and to discover that they were not appropriate for this situation. Crucial here is the fact that Ms. Kim provided Grace with explicit feedback on her Korean production, including politeness levels. Due to the fact that CMC is often asynchronous, it allows time for native speakers to provide a high level of correction that may be difficult in offline communication.

The second research goal was to look more specifically at how the development of pragmatic competence in CMC went beyond and differed from classroom learning. The data shows that interacting with native speakers through CMC allowed these learners of Korean to move beyond the linguistic patterns of institutional classroom interactions. As mentioned above, KSL is dominated by the *ssi* address pattern and rarely touches on the titles and kinship terms that are actually preferred in the Korean language. Unsurprisingly, the participants in our study expressed familiarity with *ssi* and associated it strongly with classroom learning. However, what is more interesting and surprising is that three of the four learners totally avoided *ssi* in their CMC interactions and instead displayed a strong preference for kinship terms. Even though the remaining participant (John) did use *ssi* frequently, his usage of the term differed in crucial ways to how it is portrayed as a “polite” form in KSL. The fact that use of address terms in naturalistic CMC differs from patterns appearing in classroom learning means that previous studies of address term usage that are limited to classroom settings (e.g., Belz & Kinginger 2002, 2003) may only provide us with a limited picture as to how L2 learners use these forms.

The third and final goal of our study was to look at the role that address terms played in shaping learner identity in CMC. On the most basic level, our research demonstrates that CMC can become a platform for L2 learners to progress from “language learners” to “language users” and that the application of address terms can be a powerful tool for this. In the case of Grace, by communicating with her former teachers in online environments and addressing them as *enni* ‘older sister,’ she aimed to progress from the identity of “student” to that of “friend,” although this was only accepted by Professor Kang and not by Ms. Kim. Jennifer and Jane also used *enni* as a signal that they were knowledgeable of Korean cultural norms and thus were “legitimate speakers” of the language. By using Korean titles and kinship terms in CMC environments, these L2 learners attempted to, in the words of Thorne, Black, and Sykes (2009), “propel...beyond the confines of the institutional identity of ‘student’ by fraying the boundaries separating language study from social life” (pp. 814-815).

However, the participants found that claiming identities as legitimate speakers was complicated by their lack of pragmatic competence, their pre-existing languages and identities and (differing) reactions from Korean native speakers regarding what was appropriate in relationships with “foreigners”. Grace and John, most notably, attempted to establish patterns of address terms, language use and interaction that existed outside of typical Korean social hierarchies. Although some native speakers (such as Professor Kang; Jinhee and Jinyoung) accepted or even encouraged these non-Korean patterns of interaction, other native speakers (such as Ms. Kim and Shinae) rejected the same patterns and tried to establish more Korean-style interactional norms. In line with the findings of L2 pragmatics studies conducted in offline environments (e.g., Brown 2011; Du Fon 1999; Higgins 2011; Siegal 1994), these observations show that identity and norms of interaction in L1-L2 CMC encounters are not fixed or dictated along L1 forms, but are open to negotiation.



The fact that “appropriateness” in CMC encounters is negotiated rather than fixed has some important implications for the way that we conceptualize and research pragmatic competence in CMC environments, not to mention the way that pragmatics is taught in language courses (i.e. both online and offline communication). Importantly, it demonstrates an obvious need for researchers to go beyond crude comparisons with L1 use when discussing whether L2 use is pragmatically appropriate. When compared directly with L1 usage, Grace’s use of *enni* (for example), would simply be labeled as inappropriate, incorrect or deficient. However, when contextual factors (such as Grace’s identity and the reactions of her interlocutors) are taken into account, we see that things are more complicated and that in some ways Grace’s use of *enni* may actually be appropriate (seeing as Professor Kang was seemingly accepting of it) and socially skillful (since it allowed her to create more intimate relationships).

It should be emphasized here that the propensity for the current study to capture the unstable and negotiated nature of address term usage (and pragmatic norms more broadly) was heightened by the use of CMC data that was naturally occurring. Whereas research on offline pragmatics frequently extends to the consideration of naturally occurring interactions (e.g., Brown 2011; Siegal 1994), CMC research has been slow to follow this lead. This has been symptomatic of a tendency to see CMC as being a pedagogical tool, rather than one of the primary channels through which learners use the language outside of the classroom and make contact with the community in which the language is spoken. In order for research on CMC pragmatics to keep pace with the social turn in SLA research, more studies on the negotiation of pragmatic norms and learner identities in naturally occurring CMC are required across a broad range of languages and learning situations.

For the language teacher, the finding that appropriateness is fluid rather than fixed means that prescribing idealized L1 norms as the unquestionable goal to which learners should aspire may be of limited usefulness. In fact, as previously claimed in Brown (2011), prescribing that learners use the language “just like Koreans” could be counter-productive, as it will not prepare them for authentic interactions with Korean native speakers, where such norms are open to negotiation. However, even if L1 norms do not always apply to L2 interactions, L2 learners still need to be aware of these norms so that the choices they make (such as following the norms or flaunting them) are informed choices rather than ignorant ones. On this point, there is a particular need for language teachers to cover CMC language use in their courses, so that language learners have the information and support that they need to negotiate appropriateness in online environments. Learners then need to be taught the skills of negotiation – the strategies that native speakers use to establish and contest what it means to use address terms appropriately in a given situation. Learners can explicitly be taught formulas that can be used, for example, when the learner wants to ask whether he/she may use a certain address form or when the learner wants to request a native speaker interlocutor to use a specific address form towards him/her. Although the outcome of such negotiations may be different than for L1-L1 encounters, there is no reason to think that the same procedures of negotiation cannot be used. The role of the teacher, therefore, should be to educate learners regarding how to make and negotiate stylistic choices and how these choices influence their self-presentation and convey different social meanings.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Brown (2011) argues more generally that these neo-Confucian values are tied up with the overarching system of honorific language that can be found in Korean. Consistent with Brown (2011), we see address forms as being one manifestation of honorifics in Korean and thus also tied up with the same social values.

<sup>2</sup> We use KSL as a general term that encompasses the learning of Korean as an additional language in all contexts. Unlike many who work in the field of Korean language education, we do not make a strong division between KFL and KSL.

<sup>3</sup> -nim may even appear without any preceding address term and thus function akin to a respectful second-person pronoun (as in *nim-uy nikneym-ilang chwulche-palkhi-lkkeyyo* 'I will cite your nickname and the source' – Lee, 2009, p. 119). Although not yet widespread, this innovation is particularly interesting since (as noted above) Korean lacks a deferential second-person pronoun.

<sup>4</sup> In Hwang's (1991) original terminology, English is "first-name oriented" and Korean is "title and family-name oriented."

<sup>5</sup> The reasons why Korean textbooks choose to present address forms in this way are rather complex (see Brown, 2010). On the surface, the simplified patterns of address form usage may appear simply as strategies to make the language "easier" for language learners by encouraging them to stick to one "safe" mode of address. However, Brown (2010) makes some compelling arguments as to why "simplification" on its own cannot explain the phenomenon, including (crucially) the observation that the proliferation of the *ssi* pattern (and other simplified honorific forms) continues even in advanced-level textbooks. Rather, Brown (2010) claims that the representation of address terms (and honorifics more broadly) "builds on certain preconceptions regarding the ability that "foreign" learners can acquire in the language and the social positions of non-Koreans in Korean society" (p. 47). One such "preconception" may be that the elaborate patterns of address form usage (including the use of titles and kinship terms) may not be needed by second language learners who are "outsiders" to Korean society and who may not uphold the same hierarchical and/or collective modes of interaction.

<sup>6</sup> The proficiency levels here are estimates based on oral interactions with the first author, analysis of CMC transcripts and consideration of Korean learning background.

<sup>7</sup> Even though Ms. Kim provides Grace with corrections, we believe that these interactions can still be considered "natural" CMC and therefore include them in the data analysis. Indeed, correction and, more broadly speaking, adoption of teacher-student subject positions is a common feature of interactions between native and non-native speakers (e.g. Wilkinson 2002).

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